

When combined with his continuing pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, that seemed to pose exactly the sort of threat that the Bush administration rightly focused on as part of the war on terrorism.

Continuing costs. The difficulty of rebuilding Iraq is huge. The steady stream of U.S. dead and wounded is agonizing. The strain on the U.S. military, its reserves and the families at home is growing. But these developments, while troubling, are not altogether surprising—except maybe to those who believed the Bush administration's shallow prewar rhetoric. The calculation on intervention required a weighing of risks: the risk of allowing Saddam Hussein to remain in power, defying U.N. demands, versus all the well-articulated risks of intervention. Before the war, these were frequently said to include starvation, an outpouring of refugees, a fracturing of Iraq, a descent into ethnic conflict or simple chaos. We believed that reconstruction would be long, costly and risky, and we judged nonetheless that intervention would be less risky than allowing Saddam Hussein to remain in power.

Were we wrong? The honest answer is: We don't yet know. But at this stage we continue to believe that the war was justified and necessary, and that the gains so far have outweighed the costs. Each of the 326 American servicemen and women who have died in Iraq represents an irretrievable loss for family and friends. But the nation already has reaped great benefit from their sacrifice. One of the most aggressive and brutal dictators in the history of the Middle East has been eliminated, along with his proven programs to acquire deadly weapons. Millions of Iraqis have been freed from fear, and an opportunity has opened to bring much-needed political change to a region that is the source of the greatest security threats to the United States. Polls show a sometimes grateful, sometimes grudging willingness by most Iraqis to go along with U.S. plans for reconstruction.

Many Americans understandably have been surprised by the continuing casualties months after the president's appearance on an aircraft carrier under the banner "Mission Accomplished." Mr. Bush's abrupt submission last month of a large and poorly explained spending request to Congress also has strengthened public support for the idea that the Iraq mission must be failing. Yet the president's missteps have merely obscured the facts that these costs were inevitable, and that outside of the Sunni towns where support for Saddam Hussein was strongest, there is no quagmire—only a slow, logging progress forward.

Continued progress is far from guaranteed. In our view, the administration could improve the odds of success by forging a broader international coalition. For that to happen, the administration must drop its insistence on monopolizing power over Iraq's political transition, as well as the contracts for reconstruction. It must compromise with those well-meaning allies who want Iraq to succeed but disagree with U.S. tactics.

Success or failure in the effort to stabilize Iraq under a reasonably representative government that poses no threat to the world will provide the ultimate answer to the question of whether the war should have been undertaken. Because we continue to believe that U.S. security is at stake, we also believe that the United States must be prepared to dedicate troops and financial resources to that goal until it is achieved, even if it takes years. In our judgment success is possible, but much will depend on whether the administration and Congress face the magnitude of the challenge and summon the political courage and diplomatic skills necessary to meet it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. COLLINS). The Senator from Ohio is recognized.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mr. DEWINE. Madam President, I rise this morning to pay special tribute to a special man whose life ended exactly as he lived it—in service to others. LTC Dominic Rocco Baragona—"Rocky" to his family and friends—passed away at the age of 42 on May 19, 2003, near Safwan, Iraq. He had been deployed to Iraq and Operation Iraqi Freedom on March 16, 2003.

Lieutenant Colonel Baragona, originally from Niles, OH, was commander of the 19th Maintenance Battalion based in Fort Sill, OK. As commander, he was in charge of nearly 900 soldiers. At the time of his death, he was the highest ranking U.S. service member killed in Iraq.

Rocky Baragona dedicated his life to his country. After graduating from West Point Military Academy in 1982, he spent the next 21 years serving our Nation. He served with distinction, upholding what GEN Douglas MacArthur called the soldier's code—a code of duty, honor, and country. During his military career, he was stationed in Germany and twice in Korea, where he was the Terrorist Force Protection commander. He also served as an officer in the 101st Airborne and with the Green Berets.

Rocky was brilliant in regard to logistics. He received many honors while in the Army, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Joint Achievement Medal, the Army Achievement Medal, the Parachutist Badge, and the Bronze Star.

His superiors relied on Rocky. As BG Richard Formica, a commanding general of the Third Corps Artillery at Fort Sill, said:

I could count on him to tell me what I needed to hear, not what I wanted to hear.

Not only did they rely on him, they respected and admired him. According to BG Brian Gehan, who commands the Army's First Corps at Fort Bragg:

Rocky was a man of tremendous passion and of tremendous integrity. It was those qualities that set him apart.

I didn't know Rocky Baragona, but I wish I had. I say that because I learned a great deal about this man from listening to his family and his friends describe this man's remarkable life. On June 18 of this year, I had the honor of attending two memorial services for him—a private service, and then his burial on the hallowed ground of Arlington National Cemetery. What I learned is that Rocky Baragona lived life well. He lived it with purpose and he lived it with love of family and of country.

At his memorial services, someone said when Rocky was around, everyone else just seemed happier; there was always more laughing. Others said he

had a positive energy, was never judgmental, and never made fun of people.

He listened. He was a good friend. He looked out for his mom and his dad and he helped others achieve their dreams. He was selfless.

Without question, Rocky Baragona was a good man. He was a nice, decent, generous, hard-working man who loved his family unconditionally. He was always there for them, willing to help anyone, any time, any place. His family called him "the rock." He was the cement that bonded that family. As his father said, "When everybody went their own way, Rocky made sure the family stayed together." Whenever they needed anything, Rocky was there, whether it was at Christmastime to bring the family together and shower them with gifts, or just to watch the Cleveland Indian games with his dad.

Rocky will continue to be there for his family; he will continue to be there in spirit, forever loved and forever remembered.

LTC Dominic Baragona was a brave man who loved his country. He was a brave man who served as a true example of what defines patriotism and service to others. He was a brave man who dedicated his career and his life to helping his fellow man, fighting for a better future for us and for our children and our grandchildren.

Left to cherish his memory are his parents, Dominic and Vilma; his brothers and sisters, Tony, John, David, Pamela, and Susan; and several nieces and nephews. You all remain in my thoughts and in my prayers.

Madam President, I will conclude with something Rocky's brother John wrote when he described Rocky:

Rocky was the smartest of the seven kids. He was the most generous of the seven kids. He was the kindest of the seven kids. He was always there for all his brothers and sisters. He was my dad's best friend and my mom's pride and joy. He was always looking out for everyone else.

That is who Rocky Baragona was, and that is how he will be remembered.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, can the Chair inform us as to the current circumstances involving morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business. The remaining 30 minutes are under Democratic control.

Mr. DASCHLE. I thank the Chair for the information. I will use my leader time rather than using morning business time to talk about three matters.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, we are back, as all of our colleagues know, on the supplemental appropriations request offered by the administration. There are a number of amendments